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ON THE

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

OF THE

AFRICAN OR OCCIDENTAL NEGRO

BY

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THE AFRICAN OR OCCIDENTAL NEGRO.

I PROPOSE in this paper to give a brief account of the physical characteristics of the Negro races of Africa, and to endeavour to estimate their intellectual capacity compared with that of other races of man.

By the term Negro, in so far, at least, as it is applicable to Africa, we understand a human being with the hair of the head and other parts of the body always black, and more or less of the texture of wool, with a black skin of various shades; dark eyes, a flat face, depressed nose, jutting jaws, thick lips and large mouth, with oblique incisor teeth. To this is to be added a peculiar odour of the skin, offensive to and unknown in the other races of man. The form of the skull, in so far as it is the brain-case, cannot, I think, be insisted on as a criterion of the African Negro, for I do not believe it has any characters by which it can certainly be distinguished from the skulls of nearly allied races, such as those of the Abyssinians and of the Oriental Negros. The true African Negro is of the average stature of Europeans, and perhaps even of their average physical strength; and in this last quality, is the only race of man that is so.

The word Negro is obviously a corruption of the Latin adjective for 'black,' and in its present sense was probably first employed by the Portuguese to designate the race of man, to them new, which they found on the western coast of Africa in the prosecution of their discoveries in the fifteenth

century. To the people of Europe, both of antiquity and the middle ages, the Negro was as little known as the Hindu or the Chinese; but he was immemorially known to the Egyptians, the Jews, the Arabs, and the Persians — most probably always as a slave.

The continent of Africa, reckoning on its western side from the southern limits of the Great Desert to the tropic of Capricorn, and on the eastern from the equator to the 33rd degree of south latitude, is inhabited by the Negro race. To the south of the limits mentioned, we exclude the squab-yellow Hottentots, although with woolly hair; and to the north, the Abyssinians, the Samauli and the Galla, who have crisped long hair, and elevated features, albeit of dusky or black complexions.

Although all African Negros partake of the general character I have now ascribed to them, there is still much diversity, consisting chiefly in the greater or less predominance of the typical features above enumerated. Thus the protuberant jaws, the flat nose, the thick lips, and black colour, appear in their most exaggerated form in the Negro of the Guinea coast, but in a greatly mitigated one in the Kaffirs of the eastern.

Travellers who have seen both the Negros of the eastern and the western coast, as well as those of the interior, are in accord respecting the general characters of the race, and probably the varieties are not greater than those which exist in the races of Europe or of India, or in the red man of America.

Quitting the continent of Africa, the first considerable deviation from the general Negro characters is found in Madagascar, an island about three times the extent of Britain. The native of Madagascar, still a Negro, is slenderer in person than the continental Negro. He has usually woolly hair, but not unfrequently hair that is long and crisp. The people of Madagascar are divided into two classes; the

ordinary Malagasi, and the Ova or Hova, that which has immemorially governed. The latter are the fairest, or rather the least black, and it is with them that the crisp long hair is chiefly to be seen. This division has given rise to the hypothesis that the Ovas are partly derived from a foreign race, a pedigree which would seem to receive some countenance from the well-attested fact that the language of Madagascar contains a few useful but not indispensable words of a Malayan language. But the same superiority in the governing class has been equally noticed in Polynesian races of the islands of the Pacific. The fact seems to me of easy explanation without having recourse to the hypothesis of an admixture of foreign blood, not likely to have taken place to the extent of changing the physical character of a long line of descendants. The chiefs, in the exercise of a despotic power, instead of breeding in-and-in, which would soon reduce the aristocracy to the level of the common people, if not below it, select the handsomest women for the continuance of their order. In Madagascar the fairer and longer-haired are preferred to the black-complexioned and woolly-haired, and thus the distinction between the ruling and the governed class may be accounted for.

After this brief account of the distribution and of the physical form of the African Negro, I shall endeavour to sketch his intellectual character by comparing it with that of the other races of man. As we know nothing to the contrary, we must assume that all the races of man are of equal antiquity, or that, in so far as mere time is concerned, every race has had the same length of time for making advancement in civilisation. The great diversity of social conditions in which we now find them must therefore depend either on quality of race or on difference of opportunity. The Negros of Africa are unquestionably the most advanced of all the woolly-headed races. They have been, immemorially, in

almost exclusive possession of the greater part of a vast continent, most of it within the tropics, but a considerable part also in a temperate climate. The region they inhabit is certainly not, compared to some other parts of the globe, peculiarly fitted to foster an early civilisation; for it is too unbroken a mass, having a broad desert to the north, and a wild unsheltered coast far from civilised man to the south. Yet it is not without its advantages. In the interior it has some great navigable lakes, and on its western side, although not on its eastern, it has several good navigable rivers, although these indeed be, in magnitude and length of course, far from equalling those of Asia, of America, or even of Europe.

Many parts of Africa are of adequate fertility, readily yielding the usual products of the tropics, with some which are peculiar to itself, as the coffee-plant and the oil-giving palm, while the experience of European colonists has shown that its extra tropical parts are well adapted to pastoral and in some degree even to tillage-husbandry. Nor can any part of the continent, in so far at least as concerns its native inhabitants, be deemed insalubrious, seeing that it produces physically one of the most robust races of man, and that not only does population not decline, but that it can afford to part yearly, even at the present day, as it has been doing for three centuries, with thousands of involuntary emigrants.

The Negroes of Africa, ever since they have been known to civilised man, have been in possession of the ox, the sheep, the goat, the horse, the camel, the hog and the dog. As long as we have known them they have cultivated millets, pulses, and rice, and since the discovery of America, maize, while the cotton-plant is either indigenous to their country or time out of mind was introduced from India. Wherever they have been seen by Europeans, they have been found in possession, however rudely exercised, of the art of fabricating malleable iron, and gold is the product of several

parts of their country. On the western coast, the Negros have been in communication with the civilised nations of Europe for four hundred years ; on the eastern with the Arabs and Hindus immemorially.

The Negros of Africa, then, had nearly all the appliances that contribute to social progress in a far higher degree than the more advanced nations of native America, who had but a single corn, a single beast of burden, and it small, inefficient, and limited to a narrow locality, while they were wholly ignorant of iron. In a far greater degree the African Negro was better off than the fairer race of the isles of the Pacific, who had no corn, no beast of burden, and not only no iron, but even no metal whatsoever, not even gold. For this race there was no bronze or iron age ; they got never beyond fish-bones and stone, and yet in some favourable cases their civilisation was of a higher type than that of many tribes of African Negros with far greater advantages.

Let us note, then, the kind of civilisation which has grown up with the African Negro under conditions far more advantageous than with many other races. It would be needless to compare the civilisation of the African Negro with that of the races of Europe. They have not even reached the civilisation of the other races of their own continent. They have not only not reached that even of the second-rate nations of Asia, but they are far below that of the third-rate civilisation of that continent and even of its islands. Their agriculture is rudimental and unskilful to the last degree, and their arts are confined to the manufacture of a coarse pottery by the hand, to the weaving of a very coarse textile fabric from cotton, and to the fabrication of malleable iron.

One remarkable example of the obtuseness of the African Negro, although referred to on a former occasion, deserves to be repeated. The elephant is more abundant in the country of the Negros than in any other part of the world;

yet they hunt it only for its flesh and its tusks, and have never tamed and reduced it to servitude, as have done all the nations of Asia in whose country the elephant is indigenous. The African elephant is, indeed, a distinct species from the Indian, but equally amenable to domestication, as sufficiently attested by the well-ascertained fact of the African being the elephant domesticated by the Carthaginians, a people of Asiatic origin, whose example the African Negros have not had the capacity even to imitate, for at the present day a Negro has no more idea of the possibility of taming an elephant than of an alligator.

Negro literature is an absolute blank. No Negro people has ever invented letters, symbolic or phonetic, and rarely have Negros adopted the writing of other races. The achievement of inventing an alphabet has been accomplished by other races on their own continent, as in the examples of the Abyssinians and ancient Mauritanians; and it has been performed in Asia and its islands by nations of the second and even third-rate civilisation, as in the case of the Javanese, Sumatrans, and Luconians; but never by a Negro people. 'There is,' says Consul Burton, speaking of Ashantee, 'the usual African want of invention; a plough, a saw, or an alphabet are equally beyond the limits of their organisation."

Architecture, in any scientific sense, is equally a blank with letters. The dwellings of the Negros, and even the palaces of Negro kings, are ever of poor temporary perishable materials. The art of making bricks, or hewing stone, seems to be unknown to all the purely Negro nations of Africa. From one extremity of the land of the Negros to the other, there exists no monument of enduring materials, no temple, no tomb, not even a bridge. The single exception consists in mosques, with walls of mud and thatched roofs, and these only in very few localities, where the Negros have intermixed with Arabs, and adopted the religion of Mahomed.

The religion of the Negros would be better named witchcraft, with wizards for its priests. It has no doctrine, no ritual, no temples; hardly even graven images. No prophet has ever arisen among them to bestow upon them a systematic and coherent belief. Incantations, with human sacrifice, accompanied by libations of foreign 'fire-water,' must be reckoned as included in the religion of the Negros.

What was thought by our forefathers of the African Negros, is to be gathered from the description given of them by one John Lok, who, tempted by its gold and ivory, visited the western coast of Africa about the middle of the sixteenth century. He pronounced them to be 'a people of beastly living, without God, law, or religion, or commonwealth;' and, says Mr. Froude, from whom I quote, 'he gave them an opportunity of a rise in creation, by carrying off five of them as slaves.' Even the Mahomedan religion, despite its bigotry and intolerance, has proved a boon to the Negro, for wherever it has penetrated, it has humanised him, human sacrifices and cannibalism disappearing on its introduction.

The wars of the Negros are but the incursions of savages, their chief object being plunder and the main booty (man) to be sold into slavery, or offered up as a sacrifice to some demon. On the western side of the continent firearms are the usual weapons, furnished by European nations; but on the eastern, the bow and arrow are more frequent. The art of war is somewhat more skilful where the Arabs have intermixed with the natives, and here alone we find a cavalry.

Government among the Negros is in the rudest form of a despotism the most absolute and unrestrained. Among no people is human life held so cheap. This is evinced by the slavery both of the western and eastern coasts, and by the human sacrifices of Ashantee and Dahomey. No Negro people has even had the capacity to build up an empire or a

monarchy of any extent and durability, such as Egyptians, Numidians, and even Nubians have erected in their own quarter of the globe; such as have always existed in most parts of Asia, and of which we have at least two examples even in native America.

This picture of Negro government, drawn chiefly from the people of the western side of Africa, is shown by recent travellers to be equally applicable to those of the eastern and central parts of the continent. Describing the kingdom of Uganda, Captain Speke observes: 'Should one of the king's wives commit any trifling indiscretion, either by word or deed, she is condemned to execution on the spot, seized by the pages, and dragged out to execution. When a new king ascends the throne, all his brothers, with the exception of one or two to secure the royal line, are put to death, and the manner of execution is by burning.' By the same writer the administration of justice is thus described: 'As to the minor business transacted at court, culprits are brought in bound by officers and reported. At once sentence is passed, perhaps awarding the most torturous lingering death, probably without trial or investigation, and, for all the king knows to the contrary, at the instigation of some one influenced by wicked spite. If the accused plead his defence, his voice is at once drowned, and the miserable creature dragged off to execution in the roughest manner.'

As to the court etiquette of Uganda, here is Captain Speke's account of it: 'An officer observed to salute "informally" is ordered at once for execution, when everybody near him rises in an instant; the drums beat drowning his cries, and the victim of carelessness is dragged off in cords and by a dozen men at once. Another man, perhaps, exposes an inch of naked leg whilst squatting, or has his mbugu-stick contrary to regulations, and he is condemned to the same fate.' 'Notwithstanding the stringent laws for the preservation of decorum by all male attendants, stark-naked

full-grown women are the valets' (of the king). For human nature's sake it could be hoped that there was some exaggeration in these statements, but the narrator is one whose fidelity is beyond all suspicion.

The Negros of Africa are eminently a home-keeping unadventurous race. Neither war, commerce, nor colonisation has ever tempted them to transgress their native bounds. To say nothing of the nations of Europe, Persians and Arabs have made foreign conquests, and even Chinese and Hindus have migrated to foreign and distant lands in the spirit of adventure; but the native African Negro is never seen abroad except as a slave.

The Negros of Africa, unambitious and unenterprising, have, notwithstanding, become involuntary colonists on a great scale. In America and its islands, which before knew no indigenous Negro race, there now exist probably not fewer than twelve millions of African Negros, a considerable number of whom are free, but the majority still in the same state of slavery in which they were when first imported. We have here, then, a tolerably fair opportunity of observing them in a state of servitude under stranger masters, in freedom under the same description of masters, and in a state of political independence their own masters. The comparison of the conditions of slavery and freedom does by no means yield results as favourable as we could have hoped. Increase of population is certainly no test of social advancement or happiness, but it is at least a proof that material wants are adequately provided for. The Negros in the United States of America—where the experiment is seen on the largest scale—are well fed, clothed, and housed, while even the intercourse of the sexes is kept under some wholesome restraint. They are looked after, in fact, very much as a prudent and intelligent farmer looks after his working and breeding cattle. The increase of numbers with them keeps pace very nearly with that of the free white

population, although the latter only be aided by a large immigration.

The emancipated Negros living among Europeans, still pursued by the proscription of race, are under political and social disabilities, and looked upon as outcasts; in fact, as a nuisance, of which the commonwealth ought to get rid. In our own colonies, the antipathy of race is as strong as in America; but social and political prescription are not carried to the same length, and the freedman is more his own master. Notwithstanding their emancipation, however, the Africans of our colonies, instead of increasing rapidly like the bondsmen of America, increase very little if at all. Their numbers are, in fact, understood to be kept down, not from want of the means of subsistence, but by a promiscuous intercourse of the sexes, by infanticide, with corresponding vices, and the neglect of children.

In 1833, the period of slave emancipation in our colonies, the total number of the slaves of our principal colony, Jamaica, was 310,000; and by census taken in 1844 the free Negro population had fallen to 196,000, a decline of 37 per cent. A contrast to this is the rapid increase of the slave population of the United States of America. In 1850 its total amount was 3,200,000, and by the last decennial census it was in round numbers 4,000,000, an increase of 25 per cent.

In one of the greatest and perhaps the very finest island of the Antilles, the African Negros have been their own masters for half a century. They have inherited from their former masters one of the most polished languages in civilised Europe in substitution of their own many barbarous tongues, and they inherited from them also several useful arts, and some beneficial institutions unknown to their forefathers in their native country. Notwithstanding these advantages and a free and independent intercourse with the civilised nations of Europe, the success of the experiment

has not been remarkable. In the comparatively short period which has elapsed, Hayti has had many revolutions, the government oscillating between a republic and an empire, in humble mimicry of the great nation whose yoke they threw off. The same sensual vices would seem to prevail in Hayti as among the emancipated Negroes of the British colonies, and the result is that increase of population has been stayed as in these. A census of the population of Hayti in 1821, seven years after the people had become their own entire masters, gave a population of 935,000, and the present number, by estimate, is thought not to exceed 950,000, a miserable increase in 40 long years of no more than between 1 and 2 per cent.

The facility with which the African Negros submit to slavery, even their contentedness, nay, their cheerfulness in servitude, seems far to exceed that of any other race of man. This temper is evinced not only in their own country, and abroad under foreign masters, but even under masters less civilised than themselves. Thus at present some of the tribes of Red Indians, who have made some advance in the arts of civilised man, are found in possession of Negro slaves.

The Hindus have been ruled or domineered over by strangers for more than eight centuries, yet still consider themselves the first of mankind; and the Chinese can despise the Europeans, heedless of the defeats and humiliations they have inflicted on them. Not so the African Negro, who, after his emancipation, looks up to and humbly imitates the master that once held him in slavery. The mimicry of French institutions already mentioned is an example; but I shall give another from a very sensible and judicious work—Mr. Anthony Trollope's 'Visit to the West Indies.' 'The West Indian Negro,' says the author, 'knows nothing of Africa, except that it is a term of reproach. If African immigrants are put to work on the same estate with him, he will not eat

with them, or drink with them, or walk with them. He will hardly work beside them, and regards himself as a creature immeasurably superior to the new comer. But yet he has made no approach to the civilisation of his white fellow-creature, whom he imitates as a monkey does a man.'

The African Negro has succeeded but once in throwing off the yoke of slavery cast upon him by other races. This was the instance of Hayti, already referred to; but here he was aided by division among his masters, by great superiority of numbers, and by a climate favourable to him and fatal to his opponents—even by the education which he had received from his masters, but had never succeeded in giving himself. In the present civil war in America, the Government of the Union has, as a war measure, proclaimed his unconditional freedom; but he has taken no advantage of it, nor is he likely to do so, for he is inferior in numbers, in knowledge, and in means; while even the climate does not favour him as it did in Hayti.

The free Negros of America and its islands exhibit the same unenterprising, unambitious, and home-keeping character as those of the parent country. Barbados is greatly over-peopled, and Jamaica greatly under-peopled; but the higher wages of the latter do not tempt the people of the former to emigrate. The free Negros of America are treated as outcasts; but Hayti and Liberia, ruled by men of their own race, do not tempt them to quit the place of their birth, notwithstanding its seemingly insupportable humiliations.

The people of Madagascar, although still Negros, differ materially from those of the continent, and seem to have attained a higher social position than any other family of Negros, probably in a good measure owing to that strict insular position which, protecting them from the invasions and even incursions of hostile strangers, gives them peace. The whole of the great island is ruled by one government; the same language, with dialectic differences only, is spoken

throughout; the same laws, manners, and religion prevail over the whole island; the human sacrifices and cannibalism of the continent are unknown, and agriculture has made such progress that the people of Madagascar export both corn and cattle. This is unquestionable evidence of a civilisation superior to that of any Negro people of the continent, and the inhabitants of Madagascar form probably the most numerous nation of Negros that has ever existed under a purely native government. Yet they are equally ignorant of letters, as are all other Negros. They have neither invented them themselves nor adopted them from strangers. The same unadventurous character belongs to them which characterises the family of man to which they belong. Until the efforts of European nations to settle on their coasts, after they had doubled the Cape of Good Hope, there is no evidence of their having held an intercourse with strangers, the remote Malays excepted; and for this there exists no other proof than the existence in their language of a considerable number of Malay words, including the entire body of numerals and the names of some useful objects, which seem to have been introduced by Malayan immigrants.

The people of Madagascar, although superior in civilisation to all the Negros of the continent, with the exception of the few who have intermixed with Arabs, and adopted the religion and manners of the Arabs, and to some extent even mingled their blood with them, rank far below the third-rate civilisations of Asia and its islands; as, for example, those of the more advanced nations of Sumatra and Java. These have been immemorially in possession of phonetic alphabets, which, however, they did not carry with them to Madagascar, or carrying, they were not adopted by the people of that island.

Some writers have, in my opinion, very idly imagined that the African Negro made some approach to the anthropoid apes, forming, as it were, a link between man and monkey: a

fancy as unfounded as it would be to insist that a Shetland pony was not a horse because it wanted the size and strength of a London dray-horse or the fleetness of a racer; or that a spaniel is not a dog, because it wants the courage of the bull-dog, the size and strength of the mastiff, and the swiftness of the greyhound.

Among the arguments relied on for the degradation of the Negro below the level of other men are some minute and assuredly fanciful differences between the internal anatomy of the Negro and European. These differences, when they are real, appear to me of no value whatever, because, for aught we know to the contrary, a superiority for the Negro might just as reasonably be argued from them as an inferiority. There is no ascertained difference in the internal anatomy of the horse, the ass, the zebra, and quagga; but we know them, notwithstanding, to be distinct species, having widely different attributes.

In order to support the hypothesis of the Negro being a distinct species from the European, some writers have assumed that the mixed offspring springing from their union —as is the case with hybrids between different species of the same genus of the lower animals—can have at best but a temporary existence, and must die out in a few generations. I am thoroughly satisfied that for this extravagant notion there is not a shadow of foundation. It is not entertained on the spot where the intermixture takes place, and where, if it existed, it ought to be best known. It certainly has no place with the other mixed races of man—such as those of Europe, of Asia, or of America—and I have not the least doubt but that the number of mulattos is at present greater than it was fifty years ago, and greater then than it was one hundred years before. In physical form, vigour of constitution, and in mental endowments, the mulatto partakes equally of the quality of both parents. That, in intellectual power, they have some advantage over the Negro, is sufficiently proved by the experience of half a

century in Hayti, where the majority of leading men have been mulattos, although forming the minority of the population. I need not, however, enlarge on this subject, as I have already treated of it in another essay.

The Negro is a man with every attribute of one. He is one of many races, of very unequal qualities. He is equal, in strength and stature, to the European, but very far below him in mental endowment. He is superior in strength, but inferior in intellect, to all the races of Asia who have had the same opportunities of development as himself. He is greatly superior in physical strength to the red man of America, but intellectually scarcely his equal, if we are to judge by the progress made by the Mexicans and Peruvians, labouring under disadvantages to which the Negro was not subject.

But the African Negro, although greatly inferior to many races, is far from being at the bottom of the scale. He surpasses the Hottentot and the Australian, and is far above all the races of Oriental Negros.

The question has been much mooted, whether the African Negro be the species of a genus distinct from the European; or, to take a wider view of the subject, whether the different races of man constitute distinct species of a family. I am of opinion that the word 'species'—by which we generally determine with sufficient accuracy the members of a genus of the lower animals—cannot be applied to man, a creature to whom there is no parallel in creation, whether in bodily form or in mental endowment. The word 'race,' in its sense of 'a particular breed,' has been used by ethnologists, and must continue to be so until we find a more suitable one.

In the view I have taken of the characteristics of the African Negro, I am confirmed by the opinion of a great physiologist and eloquent writer, Professor Huxley, who, in his recent lectures on the Mammalia, takes occasion thus to express himself:—'Although, in the lower races of man now on earth, the human characters vary a little in some

particulars in a pithecoid direction, the extent of the variation is very slight indeed when compared to the whole difference which separates them—and it may be safely affirmed that there is, at present, no evidence of any traditional form or intermediate link between man and the next succeeding form in the vertebrate scale.'

The African Negro possesses a combination of qualities which distinguishes him from the rest of mankind. These consist of physical strength and capacity of enduring toil, with docility and submissiveness. It is this combination that has provoked and encouraged the more highly endowed races to reduce him to bondage in all known ages down to our own; for Negros have always been, as they still are, slaves to Egyptians, to Persians, to Turks, and to Arabs. The discovery of America, the paucity of its inhabitants, with their incapacity of toil, and the bad governments of Africa itself, created the European slave-trade, which has peopled the New World, greatly to its detriment, with a race of man wholly new to it. No other race of man is so amenable to bondage as the African Negro. The Red Indian pined and died in slavery; the Hindu and Chinese subjected to the treatment which the Negro has undergone in America would sulk and commit suicide, and the Malay would certainly run-a-muck. Among the people now referred to slavery no doubt exists; but the slaves and the masters are for the most part fellow-countrymen, of the same race, and speaking the same tongue. This is a kind of bondage very different from that of the Negro, whose master views him only in the light of a superior description of cattle.

It is not necessary that I should describe all the demerits of African slavery; but I shall briefly advert to a few of them. It degrades the slave and demoralises the master, who is obliged to look on human beings in the light of mere cattle; and I am satisfied that the master is, on the whole, the greater loser of the two. The mere presence in the same country of an inferior race of man, bearing in mind and

body the broad stamp of inferiority—even if it consisted of freemen—would be a great evil. In a society consisting of these discordant elements, no substantial equality is possible; since, whether in a free or servile condition, the inferior race would be certain to be viewed by the superior as a degraded class, with whom it is impossible to amalgamate. The terrible revolution—so destructive to life and property, and so threatening to liberty—now going on in America is wholly due to the presence, chiefly in one section of this great country, of an African population, whose whole number does not exceed one-fifth part of the entire community. Could so great a catastrophe have been anticipated, assuredly we should have had no slave-trade or slave population in America.

Another objection readily presents itself. The introduction of African labourers to compete with European, is plainly throwing an obstacle in the way of legitimate colonisation, and hence obstructing the progress of society. On the same principle, I think the Anglo-Saxons of California and Australia justified in throwing difficulties, as they do, in the way of the settlement of the Chinese, who, although a race far superior to the African Negro, are yet incapable of amalgamating with Europeans, or, indeed, even sharing in a free government with them.

The inferiority of the African is pleaded as a reason for holding him in slavery; but I presume it will hardly be argued that any one race of man was expressly created to be slaves to another, as certain black ants have been created to be the servants and slaves of certain red ones. It is quite beside the question to plead that the material wants of the Negro are better provided for in slavery than in freedom, for his happiness and free-will are all that deserve consideration. The relation of the Negro to Europeans, as a slave, was assuredly not the design of nature, but the pure creature of accident.

The other objection to Negro slavery in a community of

European masters, is quite obvious—the obstacle which the contrast of races opposes to emancipation. Had, for example, the millions of slaves in the Confederate States of America been of European race, it is certain that public opinion would long ago have caused their emancipation, and the freedmen would have been imperceptibly absorbed in the mass of the people, as has actually happened in all the civilized countries of Europe, and in a great measure even in some Asiatic countries, such as India and China. It is the reverse with the Negro slave. His bondage seems justified by his very complexion, and even when emancipated he continues a degraded outcast. Even density of population, which, by making it unprofitable to breed slaves, has been in Europe and in the more civilised parts of Asia the main cause of the extinction of slavery, would not improve the condition of the emancipated Negro, for he would still be a degraded being in the eyes of the majority. Transportation, even if a country could be found fit to receive the Negroes, would be impossible, from the vastness of their numbers; and their social inferiority on the American soil seems therefore destined to continue an irremediable evil – a just but, perhaps, too severe a retribution on the descendants of those who gloried in the slave-trade.

A few freed Negroes in the colonies of European nations, but never in their own country, have occasionally acquired some distinction in art, science, and literature, and well-meaning persons have adduced such cases as evidence of high capacity. But the examples have been rare, and the attainments not above mediocrity. We wonder at them only because they appear in a Negro shape, much as the poet represents superior beings as wondering at the attainments of Newton.

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